

Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children

MEETING MINUTES

October 7, 2014

*****APPROVED*****

Members Present:

Sgt. Mark Boody
Denise Busley
Dr. Johanna Buzolits
Deborah Carley
Thomas Cottrell
Jerry Dorsey, IV
Kathy Hagenian
Dr. Angie Kennedy
Thomas Knapp
Mary Lovik
Hon. Cheryl Matthews
Phyllis Van Order
Dorie Vasquez-Nolan
Carol Hackett Garagiola, Chair

Members absent:

Kristen Clark
Pamela Fitzgerald

DHS Staff Present:

Kelcey McArthur
Danielle Marek

Welcome and Introductions

Chair C. Hackett Garagiola convened the fourth meeting of the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children, at the Grand Tower – Room 1-A, 235 South Grand Avenue, Lansing, MI 48933 on October 7, 2014 at 9:00 am, welcoming and thanking members and DHS staff for their participation. Members and DHS staff introduced themselves.

Approval of Agenda

C. Hackett Garagiola offered an amendment to Section V. of the October 7, 2014 meeting agenda to replace the consideration and discussion of school policies with consideration and discussion of systems responses, given that Kristen Clark, the Task Force member with most expertise regarding school issues, was unable to

attend the October 7 meeting and that Task Force members present at the October 7 meeting included many experts in systems responses to child sexual abuse.

Motion: J. Dorsey, IV to approve the October 7, 2014 meeting agenda, as amended. Seconded by T. Cottrell. Motion carried.

Approval of September 16, 2014 Meeting Minutes

Motion: T. Cottrell to approve the September 16, 2014 meeting minutes. Seconded by T. Knapp. Motion carried.

Systems Responses Consideration and Discussion

Members engaged in in-depth discussion of responses of the criminal justice system and the child welfare system to allegations of child sexual abuse. Members also discussed responses of mental health system, medical system, and family and “informal” community systems to child sexual abuse. Members considered the critical importance of multi-disciplinary teams in effective responses to child sexual abuse, and the impact of trauma-informed responses not only on the quality of child sexual abuse investigations, but on the victim’s and victim’s family’s healing processes. Members agreed to review the State of Michigan *Model Child Abuse and Neglect Protocol With an Approach Using a Coordinated Investigative Team* (DHS - PUB - 794, Rev. 10-13) and the State of Michigan *Forensic Interviewing Protocol* (DHS - PUB - 779, Rev. 4-11), with a particular focus on child sexual abuse and trauma-informed responsiveness. Members discussed the importance of training on the *Model Child Abuse and Neglect Protocol With an Approach Using a Coordinated Investigative Team* (DHS - PUB - 794, Rev. 10-13) in law enforcement academies, and training on local protocols based on this Model Protocol for law enforcement in in-service training. Similar training also was identified as important for prosecutors and child welfare caseworkers, friend of the court and other court, child welfare, and criminal justice systems professionals.

Members discussed the need to recognize that child sexual abuse often happens in the context of other criminal activity, and the victim and victim’s family need “holistic” approaches to the many layers of trauma they are experiencing. Members discussed the need for community education about both the proper responses of systems to child sexual abuse, and the reality of the local community’s responses to child sexual abuse, so that victims and their family members know what to expect from the systems responding to child sexual abuse.

Members discussed the importance of all adults knowing how to appropriately respond to a child’s disclosure of sexual abuse, how to make proper referrals regarding disclosures of child sexual abuse, and the requirements of the mandated reporter law. Members discussed the need for comprehensive and continuing training for mandated reporters and others regarding the mandated reporter law, in light of confusion among mandated reporters and others concerning this law. Members discussed the need for training for first responders, school personnel, mental health care providers, medical health care providers and others on the

existence, substance and purposes of the forensic interviewing protocol, in order to develop awareness of the need for proper forensic interviews to be conducted only by professionals with comprehensive and on-going training and skills development in forensic interviewing. Members identified the need for comprehensive and on-going training and skills development for professionals who conduct forensic interviews of children regarding allegations of child sexual abuse.

Members discussed the existence of a number of public awareness programs regarding child sexual abuse, and were provided with information about how to access some of these programs for review and consideration during future Task Force meetings. Members were provided with the *2012 Report from the Missouri Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children* for review and consideration during future meetings. Tom Knapp offered to invite and arrange for the presence of the Executive Director of the National Children's Alliance at a future Task Force meeting, to advise members about efforts across the country regarding best and promising multi-disciplinary team responses to child sexual abuse. Denise Busley offered to invite and arrange for the presence of the Executive Director of a public relations group working on child sexual abuse prevention efforts, to advise members at a future meeting about such efforts. Members discussed the need for education regarding child sexual abuse for any and all professionals in any systems responding to child sexual abuse.

Members discussed the often-conflicting timelines for criminal proceedings and child protective proceedings in child sexual abuse cases involving the same victim and perpetrator. Members discussed the need of all professionals working in systems responding to child sexual abuse for information about best and promising interventions for perpetrators, both adult perpetrators and juvenile perpetrators. Members discussed the role of perpetrators in victims' recovery. Tom Cottrell, in his capacity as a treatment provider and colleague of a member of the Michigan Association for Treatment of Sex Abusers, offered to provide information to members about best and promising practices in treatments and interventions for child sexual abuse perpetrators.

Information Gathering Status and Updates

Data workgroup members reported on the progress of survey content and process. J. Buzolits asked members for final comments and input regarding the survey content she had developed, and provided a proposed timeline for dissemination of the surveys.

School Policies

Members agreed to devote the 11.7.14 meeting to the mandates in MCL 722.632b and MCL 380.1505 regarding school policies.

Lunch

Members participated in a lunch at their own expense, using no public funds.

Public Comment

No public comment was offered.

Thank you and next meeting

C. Hackett Garagiola thanked members for the thoughtful discussion that took place during the meeting. The next Task Force meeting is scheduled for:

Thursday, November 6, 2014
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
General Office Building
Conference Room B – 1st Floor
7015 Harris Drive
Dimondale, MI 48813

Adjournment

**Motion: C. Matthews to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by J. Dorsey, IV.
Motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Carol Hackett Garagiola